

Victoria Street Newz

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*"All the news that fits,
we print"*

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Ask the poverty-ridden and homeless in a conventional group what they want and they will tell you exactly what they think the public wants to hear. We've all been nicely trained to parrot the party lines.

You'll hear about addictions, mental illness and system scamming. You'll hear about the need for 'supportive housing,' more shelters and better social work services. You will hear exactly what you expect to hear.

I refuse to go to any more conventions to hear the same crap that's shoveled to the tune of no real results. Billions of dollars wasted to say, "Homelessness is a problem."

Ask those same de-housed people what they want behind closed doors, without any coordinator class, social workers or political influence peddlers and listen to the difference. The story is very, very different.

Confessions of a Rough Sleeper

by TVParkdale

"The poor live with a chronic invasion of privacy, the likes of which no middle/upper class person would tolerate for an instant. Their life stories are passed from worker to worker, team to team, medical practitioners, psychiatrists, housing workers, social workers, bureaucrats, pharmacists, drop-in staffs, government officials all in the name of 'help.'"

Behind closed doors, with our own, we hear about how the system is so broken it leads to chronic frustration, clinical depression, increased emotional crises, feelings of complete inadequacy and mental breakdowns. You'll hear how some clients have to have 2-10 workers/lawyers/doctors just to negotiate the paperwork.. You'll hear the self-hating guilt about having to accept handouts, leftovers and government support from people who could support themselves on token jobs if they didn't have to pay huge rent or stay in subsidized housing.

You'll see the tears over homes we've had and loved that weren't 'acceptable' to the outside world. "They took our freedom. They destroyed our community," are statements I hear frequently.

Squats, camps near train tracks, under the bridges, street crews - our dreams of something better—shattered. People we've loved, people who helped us survive that we must turn away from our doors on a freezing winter's night because 'housing' doesn't allow us to have overnight guests that stay too long or make too much noise. Of how many of us have been evicted because we've let the very people who insured our survival crash on the floor.

Oh yes, it's pleasant to be warm, the toilet flushes and there's a sense of gratitude corrupted with survivor guilt because for everyone who is housed, we leave dozens behind, abandoned. We go to their funerals to mourn and feel more shame for being alive. We don't talk about that to 'outsiders.'

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About Street Newz

"BUILDING BRIDGES IN THE COMMUNITY"

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Founded in 2004,
Victoria Street Newz welcomes
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personal stories, interviews,
event reviews, cartoons, poetry,
photographs, or artwork, but we
can't guarantee everything will
be published. We reserve the
right to edit, and will not print
anything libelous, racist, sexist,
or homophobic. Letters sent to
the editor are assumed to be for
publication, must include phone
number or email (if possible, for
confirmation) and may be edited
for length. You can publish using a
pseudonym, or anonymously.

We are devoted to a triple bottom
line philosophy - concerned about
our environmental and social, as
well as financial, well-being.

You can contribute to social change
by supporting the Victoria Street
Newz team, by pondering the root
causes of poverty, and by working
for peaceful, non-violent change.

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information about us, can be
found are at
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JUST ANOTHER RANT

I heard that some people didn't
like the photo on the May cover
(REUTERS/Ajay Verma).

The image showed two college
students, their faces artistically
painted for a competition to raise
HIV/AIDS awareness in India.
One face had the word "AIDS" written on it, the other read
"DEATH." I did not intend to remind anyone of their own
impermanence, or offer the word "DEATH" as a directive.

This newspaper is titled "Street Newz." It is not the "Let's
Gloss Over the Horrid Realities of Street Life" Newz, or the
"Don't Worry Be Happy" Newz. We are the Street Newz. Our
mission is to present a realistic portrait of the world beyond the
status quo - the children, sisters, brothers, parents, uncles, aunts
who, each for their own reason, find themselves in dire straits.
We faithfully examine dominant social and political structures
that continue to reward the ultra-rich while watching increasing
hunger, illness, and homelessness pervade our streets.

It's not that we refuse to print stories of celebration from the
streets, about a cooperatively established temporary autonomous
shelter site, or the empty abandoned buildings that are opened
to the homeless, or the creation of a fixed site needle exchange.
We would love to print those happy stories. Sadly, they live
only in our imaginations. While there have been some local
successes - Woodwynn Farms, for example, and a few new
housing units for clients of the mental health system, we are
not yet celebrating radical changes to a system that promotes



janinebandcroft.blogspot.com

an inequity of wealth distribution
unprecedented in human history.
We wish we could shift focus and publish
happy stories - not just the individual
successes, but a dramatic re-working of the
economic underpinnings that created the
mess in the first place. We do not blame the victims, we look
to the source and encourage real change for the benefit of all.

We are the Street Newz. We are, and we represent, those who
are socially marginalized, economically challenged, physically
disabled, thrown away by a dominant culture that would prefer
to pretend that everything's alright, that we live in a democracy,
and that capitalism is good for us and the planet. We are sorry
if the truth upsets you, if realizing that people die horribly and
unnecessarily every single day disturbs your sensibilities, but
believe me, it's more difficult to live it than simply to read about it.

The Street Newz is a very modest endeavour. We don't hire
reporters to send on assignment, we encourage ordinary people
to write and be published. Our contributors have no incentive
other than being heard. If you have concerns, opinions, ideas,
about anything you see or read in the Street Newz, or indeed
about anything pertinent to street issues, please feel free to write
to us. We'd be delighted to hear from you. The people who sell
the newspaper do an outstanding job, and they appreciate all
your support. But if you have a complaint, please take it to the
source.

Thanks for your continued support and understanding.



OPINION

A Lonely Dog's Tale

by cyann ray

Those readers following my column will know I recently had to
move. My landlord discovered he wasn't limited to the 4% annual
rent increase if he claimed he needed to do major renos. My rent
was going to escalate about 40% (!) so I was forced to leave my
home of 8 years.

I was lucky to find a great place in a better neighbourhood with
reasonable rent and a decent landlord. My dog, however, did not
fare as well. He too lost his home of nearly eight years. The mice
and sketchy neighbours never bothered him, nor did he mind the
unscrupulous management/landlord. As far as he's concerned, this
move was the worst thing that ever happened to him. My poor
dog had all his (dozen or so) daily dog friends taken away and for
nearly 6 weeks (much longer in dog years!!), he's barely even seen
another dog.

There are no off-leash areas in my new neighbourhood and because
of that there are no gathering places for dogs to be dogs. They are
social, pack animals and need to be social with other dogs. A brief,
chance meeting on the sidewalk while tethered to their owner's
wrist does not count, even if some bum smelling occurs.

James Bay is a beautiful neighbourhood. And I'm sure there are
lots of dogs around here. But after over a hundred hours (before
9 am/after 6 pm) of combing this area with my pooch rarely
seeing another dog, let alone a group of dogs, I've made several
conclusions. The obvious one is that James Bay dogs are being
driven to off-leash areas. Dallas Road between Mile Zero and
Clover Point is one of the original off-leash areas and I suspect
that's where most of the locals are going. Unfortunately, physical
disabilities make walking there, socializing, then walking home a
little much for both of us.

My other conclusion is that dogs can't miss what they've never had.
A puppy raised on a leash, never knowing the freedom and social
opportunity of being off-leash with other dogs, will not yearn for
them. His human family will become his "pack." Personally, I feel
that denying dogs the opportunity to run free with other dogs is sad.
And it creates anti-social dogs who then need to be leashed all the
time because they've never learned to socialize.

And it's this leashing thing
I really want to address.
Leash laws are essentially
counter-productive. They
are teaching people to teach
their dogs restriction and
dependency. If your dog
is going to spend his life
tethered, you don't even
have to name him. He'll
always be three feet away
tied to your wrist ... no need
to ever call for him. And no
need to train him either.

Don't get me wrong.
Lots of dogs need to be
leashed. Puppies in training.
Aggressive dogs. Untrained
dogs. But definitely not all
dogs. My precious mutt
hasn't been on a leash in
about seven years (unless I
spot one of those evil dog
cops in their white vans,
then I appease the system).

We trained our dog to be
verbally controlled. We
established a "mental

leash." Granted, we were serious dog folks and got a puppy
knowing he'd be with at least one of us 24/7. Getting a puppy to
leave alone or lock in a crate for 8 hours a day doesn't seem right.
But since that same pup will likely spend his life tied to something
I guess it doesn't matter that he is unpredictable and cannot be
trusted. (He can't be trusted because he doesn't trust you). Having
a trained dog who just listens and obeys is a joy. I trust my dog
completely, as he does me.

Living across the street from an off-leash park kept me from seeing
how dogs fare in other neighbourhoods. Now that we are living in
one such parkless neighbourhood, I see a notable difference in both
the dogs and their owners.

Keep in mind that dog sightings are rare here, but of the dogs we've
seen just a small percentage stopped to let my dog say "hello," as
dogs like to do. What often happens is the owners prevent the dogs
from greeting each other. They cross the street. They pick their dog
up. They tug on the leash pulling their dog away from mine. And
I've been told, "My dog doesn't like other dogs."

Imagine having a dog that doesn't like other dogs! We (and I mean
"we" the human race, NOT me!) have bred sociability out of these
critters for our own convenience and control. And the leash laws,
enforced by a team of intimidating bullies, are a major influence in
this process.

The law should be: Your dog must be under effective control at all
times. PERIOD. If you can do that verbally, congratulations. If you
need a leash, use a leash.

Keep in mind that a leash does NOT prevent your dog from
jumping up on somebody. It does NOT keep your dog from biting
or otherwise frightening somebody. A leash does NOT ensure that
poops will be picked up either. A leash does nothing except allow
owners to forgo training their dog. It also gives the impression
that the dog is under control. But the reality is that off-leash dogs
walking obediently alongside their owners are the dogs truly
controlled. Some pooch yarding on the rope while the owner holds
tight, is NOT controlled. If that leash breaks, how is that dog being
controlled? He runs away, or into
the street and the owner has to
entice their dog with treats to get
him to come back. That's called
negative reinforcement. I've seen
it a million times. The dog gets
rewarded (a treat) for bad behaviour
(not coming when called).

There will always be people who
don't like or understand dogs. But
North America is the only place
in the world that discourages dog
ownership by making it such an
ordeal. It's really sad because dogs
can be very therapeutic. They are
an integral part of our lives offering
many people companionship, hope,
motivation, exercise and security.

As a responsible dog owner, I must
meet HIS need to be with other
dogs. And thanks to the skill and
generosity of Tony Hoar of TONY'S
TRAILERS, my dog and I are mobile
again. We will be biking the 3 miles
uphill, during rush hour, to visit our
former park and all his social, free-
running, happy dog pals. Because
we DO miss what we enjoyed for so
many years.

INSERT BRAIN HERE



woodsycartoons.blogspot.com

BY WOODSY

Behind closed doors, we talk about the isolation. About knowing that if one of us died today, our body might not be found for weeks.

If we are ill, no one will bring a street nurse from the clinic, warm a can of soup or call the ambulance. These aren't counted as 'homeless deaths.' Yet the reality of poverty housing is that death happens frequently because 'the worker wasn't available' or 'the neighbours didn't notice anything until it started to smell.' Then the closest social service agency will throw some sort of memorial that has little to do with anything we might have actually wanted or believed.

Behind my brown door you'll hear about the stunning invasions of privacy by social services, housing workers, case managers, supervisors, means-testers—none qualified to do intensive therapy yet digging into the painful pasts of those they claim to serve. Tearing apart the pieces without the skill of putting such a complex puzzle of a disrupted life back together.

There's the \$20 research studies that carry on endlessly around this city [Toronto]. Go to a conference, or research study, get the \$20-40 for your input, let someone shred your shame apart and analyze your personal tragedy then send you home with the honorarium for saying what you know they wanted to hear. Tell them all about your destruction, recall it, flashback by flashback and spend days swirling helplessly in traumatic memories with no supports. You're just another research number. The twenty dollars can buy a bottle, or maybe a chicken dinner and chips to comfort you so you can pick your pieces up again. Maybe an old street crew friend will be around to share your woes but it certainly won't be the paid worker who spends hours stitching up the emotional razor slashes.

The poor live with a chronic invasion of privacy, the likes of which no middle/upper class person would tolerate for an instant. Their life stories are passed from worker to worker, team to team, medical practitioners, psychiatrists, housing workers, social workers, bureaucrats, pharmacists, drop-in staffs, government officials all in the name of 'help.'

Sign the dozens of consent forms, please, right here, at the 'X.' Just in case someone scams a nickel's worth of taxpayer's money, that although they might really need it, they are not legally entitled to have. Then the 'help' that has stomped on every shred of dignity that a poor person might possess complain that, "these clients have boundary issues."

Of course we have no 'boundaries' left. We bleed publicly to receive our pittances so often we can't help but hate those we perceive as ever-present paid-love, inconsistently abusive foster parents. We aren't allowed to tell them, "F off. I don't want to talk about it." or, "F off. You know f**k all about housing the poor, my history, what I wanted for my life, or anything else, you clueless twit."

Then we blame the poor for a 'lack of willpower.' Well, what creates 'willpower'? Willpower is belief that since we experienced effecting change in the past, we are capable of effecting change in the future.

If you have little experience with seeing change effected, why would you have any willpower to see something new through? The poor are up against the most powerful forces in the world. Most aren't blinded by false hopes that buoy the middle class. Someone controls their money supply, controls their children, controls their housing, controls what employment that can have, controls their health-care, controls what medications they can access, controls their food supply, controls where they can live, controls what they are entitled to receive in education and on and on.

When the poor come up with a real solution, they are ruthlessly stomped on by the so-called left and right as well as the media unless being portrayed as pitiful victims with 'mental health issues.'

Great ideas that the poor promote are stolen from their brains to be sanitized then utilized by the 'professionals' as newfangled programs while agencies weasel out more funding by claiming it was a 'client led idea.' The same client who showed up at the meeting because s/he needed the proffered free meal. No permanent pay-cheque to be had for the 'client' who came up with the concept, of course. S/he is 'not a qualified professional.' I stopped counting how many friends I've watched

explode from injustice because some professional collected a pay-cheque after said friend instituted a great little inexpensive and much-needed program as an unpaid volunteer. How much 'willpower' can one have left after that experience?

Housing squats and camps are a case in point. A 'willing' crew gets together, unites and sets up house. Without legal title they are vulnerable to police raids. Social services might step in to 'save' them, splitting them apart and isolating each into shelters and housing them far apart to 'save problems.' Any sense of community or political influence they might hope to gain is shattered. They are given welfare or ODSP and turned from people with part-time work paying no rent into a begging citizenry. Some will not stay. They'll find another bridge or crew. Then that community will be raided as well. Ah yes, ladies and gentlemen, these are the 'hard-to-house-hardcore-homeless.' The merry-go-round goes on and on...

Social service agencies create 'supportive housing.' The residents have no say in the rules, how the place is run, the level of service or intrusion into their personal space. Sometimes there are house meetings that pay lip service to the idea, but in truth, it's just to shut the clients up, cut down on the roaches and bedbugs while it keeps the pay-cheques and status quo rocking along. If the residents 'misbehave' they are told to "get into (name program) or be evicted."

The 'regular' neighbours complain about the subsidized-housed ones. "They have no sense of community. They don't care about their neighbours." The same neighbours that sneer down their noses publicly at the 'lazy bums' and complain about paying taxes for "welfare frauds." Or perhaps, the neighbours who care realize there's a problem but are simply ineffective at knowing what to do about it.

Jack Tafari, who was a main founder of [Portland's] Dignity Village. once told me "My biggest challenge in building Dignity was convincing the de-housed they don't have to stay in the missionary position."

So, what is the solution?

Stop blindsiding the poor with middle class social-work agendas. Face reality. The government is never going to build enough, or adequate housing for every need. There is never going to be a 0% unemployment rate in this country. Those solutions don't serve the politico-corporate agenda.

When the poor come up with their own communities or alternative solutions, support them. Show them that you will back solutions that are not your ideological preference. Show them that they can effect change if they fight. Fight to legalize their tent cities and their squats and their right to house themselves, work at whatever jobs they can for a little pay or jobs they can invent. You'd be shocked at the energetic creativity some can unleash if you cut us loose.

Stop forcing us into the arms of social services because it assuages your guilt. Understand that every time a squat, trailer/van stop, or camp is crushed that you destroy our very hopes and dreams for a brighter, more independent future. Realize that you are turning your own countrymen into refugees. Fight for our right to build our own communities even if it looks like a messy eyesore to you.

Because that's what it's really all about. The poor are an eyesore. We make you feel guilty when we're hanging around under bridges, or at hobo camps, or panhandling somewhere public and political. Our visibility is proof that we as a society do NOT have enough housing and that we don't have all the answers to poverty reduction, or unemployment, or disability or substance use or mental health struggles and we will never have perfect solutions.

Considering the economic downturn, letting people find creative alternatives is going to become even more imperative soon. We need to believe we can effect change.

Admit that the people who are considered 'crazy,' or 'addicted' might actually know more about dealing with other people sharing their fate than those who are profiting from their poverty. Stop blaming the poor for increasing

poverty. When Harris gutted Ontario's social programs and abolished rent controls and tenant protection laws, 100,000 de-housed people did not suddenly lose their minds in the following couple of years.

The present minimum wage will not cover the cost of rent in Toronto, or hardly anywhere else, for that matter.

Give us the support to assert our communal will, for our needs not promoted by the colonialist missionary agenda.

Support us to learn to WIN what we want, for ourselves. Wherever that might take us all. It might even be somewhere better.

Want to know what it actually cost to build approximately 85 cabins in Tent City Toronto, and house 115 people?

- About \$1,000 in tools.
- \$0 in reno scraps that we recycled.
- \$200 per wood stove.
- \$0 in oil barrels.
- \$30 per propane heater and \$10 per week in propane, candles and gaslights bought in by private donations.
- Second hand beds, bathtubs, furniture, all scrounged from the garbage of those better off or donated by supportive visitors.
- TDRC brought in some plastic houses that cost a few thousand each although that was not the majority of housing stock.
- TDRC and the city of Toronto supplied porta-potties. Cost unknown.
- Water was hauled from an open fire hydrant

In short, our actual housing cost the taxpayers \$0 although some residents used their \$200 per month OW "street pay" or ODSP living allowance for tools and supplies which many also lent around the camp to build more housing.

The Pope Squat was in the process of being renovated compliments of the construction unions who also supplied materials. Now the new building owner has received hundreds of thousands in reno dollars from the City to produce rent-geared-to-income apartments too small for my dog to live in.

Get the picture?

Photo of Pope Squat (below) from www.emoware.org. Cover photo thanks to Pete Rockwell.

TV Parkdale's article was originally found at HomelessTales.com - thanks to Chris Johnson for forwarding it. Videos are at www.youtube.com/user/TVParkdale. Parkdale is one of the most culturally diverse neighbourhoods in Canada, and also one of the most poverty ridden and under served communities by the Toronto city politicians. Parkdale garners media attention for the most part, only in the face of disaster.



A Letter to the Mayor

Mr. Mayor,

I commend your past work on the issue of homelessness, though I feel it is difficult for a mayor and council to properly deal with such an issue in the context of institutionalized prejudices within all levels of government and outwards into our society. One of these prejudices being the tendency to isolate homelessness from poverty, to isolate the issue of poverty from that of finance, industry, culture and education and to isolate the public from a deeper understanding of any issue.

In short, I don't expect 'homelessness' to be solved on a municipal level, to say the least. So I understand the limitations of the City of Victoria to address these issues, which requires you to make difficult choices.

What I'm trying to say is that I have serious objections to the plans to 'beautify' Pandora in order to discourage loitering.

I have read the news reports and I have heard you speak at various locations about the work of the Coalition to End Homelessness. I don't doubt that you have been working hard to help create housing, and I am glad to see there is a Mayor willing to take that on while we wait (without an end in sight) for the Province and the Federal Governments to step up to their responsibilities.

I am aware that you and Victoria council object to the idea of tent encampments, and I have heard you remark, when asked to explain your position, that you would rather see real housing. In the same vein, when it comes to dealing with the people on Pandora, I would rather see a more substantial

impact on the deeper societal causes of such things as mental illness, drug abuse, family violence and 'homelessness.'

I would point out as well that advocates of autonomous shelter communities are working to create a short term response to a problem that many cannot wait to be solved.

When we have dealt with the root causes of poverty, violence, drug addictions and other human ills, then we won't need to pave greenspace to discourage loitering. Just as when we have built all the affordable housing we need, we won't need to advocate that people be allowed to shelter themselves.

There are people on the street who can no more wait for those homes than the business owners on Pandora can wait for you to 'end homelessness.'

In this city, like every other, some folks get what they want, and others wait. I understand that. I realize that discouraging drug use and other activities near to a homeless shelter will raise the safety level of those homeless people seeking to reintegrate back from the street and allow them to not be tempted, exploited or otherwise exposed to that element. I see how this could have been spun as something more substantial to the people who need relief from poverty than just extra cart parking, so I appreciate the honesty of the explanation for why these plans had to be approved.

And while I cannot offer you another way to appease the business owners and tourism industry as society slowly digs its way out of a deep crisis, I must however stand firm that in no way do I find it acceptable that public funds be used in such a manner to be seen as social cleansing. Aside from the fact that I don't feel that actions

meant to alienate an entire class of people are appropriate, I don't see the plan working. I don't see this beautification alone keeping Pandora free of loitering people. (Though I imagine it is supplemented by a new policing tactic). It isn't greenspace and benches that attract them there in the first place.

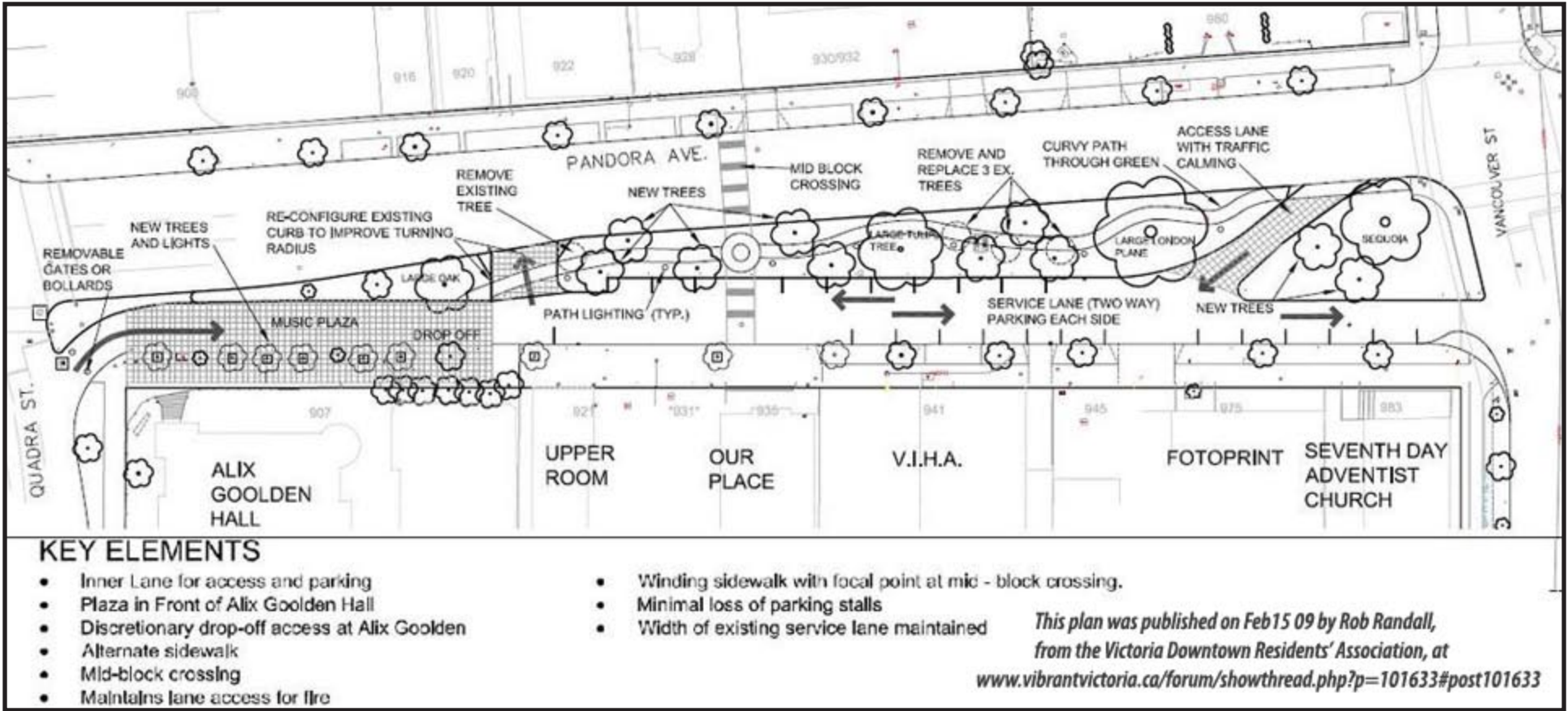
Given that we haven't ended homelessness or addiction to street drugs yet, it seems that discouraging people from one area only drives them into another. If there are no homes for them, and you aren't planning to arrest or hospitalize them all, will you pave every square foot of greenspace they land on as you chase them around the city?

I realize that this plan has already been approved, and I should have contacted council earlier to register my objections. I work two jobs and I find it hard to keep up on civic issues sometimes.

I read the article that appeared in the media just prior to the meeting, but did not assume that the plans would be approved by council so quickly. That was my mistake, but I would also like to at this time make the suggestion that the city make its website much more dynamic and informative, that minutes of meetings be posted quicker than the one month lag time we seem to have right now, and that when you do get a webcam in chambers, footage of meetings be divided into sections and searchable by issue, so that we don't have to watch two hours of zoning amendments unless we have cause to. We should be able to choose to view sections relevant to us. This will help keep all of us more informed, and more able to make timely, informed and constructive comments on the issues facing council.

Thank you for your time,

Chris Johnson



from our readers

I wish I could have a magic wand, wave it, and change humanity. But at two hundred pounds, sigh, I guess I wouldn't make a very good Tinker Bell.

Okay, so I'd settle for a big sledge hammer and use it to bash some sense into the government's existing grey matter. I'd be arrested? There's none to smash? Well I guess I can use my voice. I've got one. We all do. We are the people. We can change things. Speak up! I can't hear you! Louder, please !!!

Patricia, Victoria

I must admit to doling out the articles to myself so that the experience lasts throughout most of the month. I find each and every piece intellectually and emotionally engaging as no other regular publication is. Sometimes, I am agreeing wholeheartedly: "Right on!" and other times saying: "Oh, come on, get real! That's a crazy thing to write."

What a great work Street Newz is. I realize that it happens as a result of the community of people who write, co-ordinate, distribute; all committed to the task. However, you are the person that my attention fixes upon when I want to provide feedback. So here it is. Thank you all for putting out a paper which is of inestimable value to our community.

Solidarity in struggle, strength in diversity,

Chuck, Victoria

I can appreciate how difficult it is for you to get obituary information. Thus, it is important that The Victoria Street Newz routinely publishes the best information that it has. Your newspaper could become the most complete listing available.

What the listing does for me, is that I become conscious of this problem facing our society. It angers me that, in a country as rich as Canada, We the People are being exploited so that the wealth produced does not come to We the People but flows to the richest individuals and corporations, of which most are foreigners. Our whole system of government has been warped over the years to achieve this obscene mal-distribution of wealth.

You may be interested in the following quote taken for Cathy Crowe News dated 14 May 09.

"This year's slogan prompted me to host a Nurses Week event in Toronto that was a bit more reality based. For years, some nurses have watched an extraordinarily obscene number of people they care for die homeless. Each month names of people who have died homeless in Toronto are added to the Homeless Memorial outside the Church of the Holy Trinity behind the Eaton Centre and they now total over 550. My Nurses Week event held at the Homeless Memorial was attended by nursing leaders, Street Nurses, homeless people and social justice advocates. Their slogan was Housing: People Die Without It!"

The next step may be setting up a Homeless Memorial in Victoria.

Gerry Masuda, Duncan



(((HOMELESSNATION)))

HomelessNation.org has been active in Victoria for the past two years and now includes 238 members who are living homeless in the Greater Victoria Region.

Homeless Nation is a non-profit endeavor founded by Daniel Cross, a documentary filmmaker whose films deal with social justice and Canada's homeless. In the making of his films "The Street" (eyesteelfilm.com/thestreet.synopsis.html) and "S.P.I.T. - Squeegee Punks In Traffic" (www.spit.ca), hundreds of Montreal's homeless community shared their many, amazing stories with him. So many, that he was not able to fit them all into his films.

Cross conceived of a forum where these stories would not be lost. Where Canada's homeless community could share their stories and refuse to be ignored. A place to create equal access to online media, of sharing truths through audio/visual content for everyone to learn from. To have these stories told as an on-going dialogue for social awareness and positive change.

Today Homeless Nation has 4224 members and grows daily with outreach workers across Canada including: Montreal, Quebec; St. John's, Newfoundland; Vancouver, BC; and Victoria, BC. Goals include: building and strengthening communities, both virtual and actual, across Canada while creating dialogue between Canada's homeless and mainstream society to counter isolation and marginalization by creating a national collective voice; by and for Canada's homeless population.

Homeless Nation's outreach workers across Canada work in a variety of ways in collaboration with the homeless community. We work in shelters, day-centres, squats, at protests, community events, on the street and online.

We are dedicated to ensuring that digital tools for media, learning and communication are made available for homeless Canadians. Here in Victoria Outreach Worker Richard Boyce has worked with the homeless community to bring their voice onto the website and has mentored a number of people so that they can learn the tools needed to continue bring their voice via the internet using the mediums of video, sound, photography, and text blogs.

On **Thursday June 4, 2009** Homeless Nation Victoria will be screening 3 films that celebrate the voices of the members of this community with just over 1 hour of video. Doors open 7 pm Screening 7:30 Victoria Conservatory of Music, Wood Room side entrance 907 Johnson Street (corner Quadra) Victoria, BC Entrance fee by donation with proceeds going to Homeless Nation. For more info: www.HomelessNation.org

"Baby, It's cold outside" 30 minutes by Josef Krancevic

Born and raised in Victoria, Josef is currently living with No Fixed Address. Through a Homeless Nation project and with mentorship from HN Outreach workers and MediaNet members Josef's first film explores the many issues he faces that directly affect his ability to live with housing.

"Renoviction" by Monique Cartesan

Exploring the issue of landlords evicting tenants under the pretense of renovating and hiking the rent.

"Homeless Nation, Alive in Victoria" by Richard Boyce

A compilation of just over 2 years of Homeless Nation in Victoria, BC drawn from 238 members. Richard Boyce is the Victoria Homeless Nation Outreach Coordinator and has been raising public awareness about the issues of people who are living homeless, for more than 20 years. You can find out more about his work to protect the ancient rainforest on Vancouver Island at www.islandboundmedia.ca He also writes an environment column posted at: www.islandlens.blogspot.com.



Break the Silence

My name is Patrick, I am writing a new book about mental illness, addiction and homelessness in Victoria.



Many surveys, counts and reports were funded with taxpayer dollars which did not have any effect on the situation at all.

I decided to put faces to the numbers and blood in the ink. The people on the street have always been forgotten, ignored, and silenced. I found out that the only way to help someone is to give them the respect to look them in the eyes and listen. Politics, bureaucracy and protocols don't do this.

I have decided to dedicate this book to the street people of Victoria. I am offering a platform for you to break your silence. In turn, I will relay your message in your words for the entire world to hear. There is no money to be spent or made on this book.

The world needs to know that you exist and deserve to do so with respect. Your stories, beginnings and observations are crucial if society is ever to know the truth. The real truth is at the source and that begins with you.

Homelessness will never ease in this city unless we go to the roots of the problem. There is nobody better than you who know this than anyone else. It baffles me how so many are crusading against homelessness, but don't have the fortitude to ask a homeless person what they need or want.

I am reserving over 200 hundred pages for you to bring this truth to light once and for all in Victoria. There are faces, feelings and blood behind those numbers. Your words will have a living soul and if we are ever to break those barriers, we must stand from the crowd and have your voice heard.

The book is titled, 'City of Gardens: The Invisible Society.' It will be released March 1st, 2010. All 1st year's profits are being donated to (VHES) Victoria Human Exchange Society to help them in their fight against homelessness. Any money made after that will go towards paying off the enormous debt endured during the production of, 'The City of Gardens Collection.'

This is a privately funded project. There are no bureaucratic, political or economical influences for this project. The main objective is for Victoria's street people to break the silence and have the truth finally be heard.

If you wish to participate, you can leave your contact information at 250-386-6690.

The Advocate: Election E-Chat

by W. Robert Arnold

The three week waiting period, the time between applying for welfare and receiving it, makes people desperate enough to do something illegal and get arrested instead of showing up on the welfare rolls.

Denying people who have outstanding warrants in other jurisdictions is part of the scheme. The things these people are wanted for are likely the same kind of survival crimes they are pushed into committing here.

Is it smart to tell someone with an outstanding warrant for B&E in Ontario, say, that they cannot have welfare here? What are they going to do? Go back to Ontario to be jailed or commit a similar crime here to survive. Hitchhike 3000 miles to go to jail, or take a bus to Uplands to do a robbery and only maybe get jailed.

If I were told I could not get any money for three weeks and I was flat broke, I would certainly steal at least some food. Might just as well have a little fun as well! I am going to jail anyway. Rob a bank and go on a trip. Nova Scotia is lovely this time of year. But then, that is just my fantasy. Many people are living it for real and it becomes a real possibility.

If they paid me half of the money it would cost to investigate, legal fees, court costs and incarceration costs per year, I would promise not to do anything illegal. I could live a very decent life. It would be an income well above the poverty line.

Why do you think the warrants from other jurisdictions are not served here? They just don't want them back. As long as they stay somewhere else, the authorities in the other jurisdiction are quite happy. It costs them nothing. When they are sent back, it gets expensive.

Now the government has civilians and businesses contributing to the cost of flying people charged with crimes in other jurisdictions back to face the music. So they won't do the same things here, maybe?

The way to solve the whole problem is just to give every person enough to live a decent life. It would cost a lot less in money, and in human suffering. Generosity is the cure. Greed is the illness. It is simple; but unacceptable to the greedy ones, who still believe in the work ethic. After all, work was created to punish Adam for Eve's alleged sin. The work ethic was invented to get people to go work in the mills in England and live horrid lives. Work is the punishment for the poor. Welfare is the punishment for the very poor, employed or unemployed.

Before you go out and knock over a gas station or anything, realize that you will be playing into their hands if you do. With an Advocate's help you can get assessed for emergency need and get a cheque very nearly immediately. It is not an easy thing to do, but it is preferable to helping the powers that be demonize poor people by saying we are all crooks and are not to be trusted.

Hopefully, the next government will get rid of the three week waiting period and allow people with outstanding warrants in other provinces to receive welfare.

Hopefully, the next government will raise the rates to a point where people can afford rent, clothing, food and other necessities of life.

All these years and I still hope.

Robert is a 67 year old man who has fought poverty, his own and others, for over 45 years.



Poor People's Archives

by Lisa Helps

I need to get right to work because I have limited time and there are, literally, stacks of boxes surrounding me. But something first of how I got here and what has happened since.

I call Dan Kelly, Planning Manager at the San Francisco Human Services Agency (welfare office) who is hosting me for the week from 14th and Mission, because I can't for the life of me find Otis Street. "I've asked a number of people," I tell him on the phone, "but no one seems to know where Otis is." "It's a short two block street," he says. "Most people don't know it unless they've been on welfare." I hang up still not understanding exactly where the street and the Human Services Agency Building are or how to get there from where I am.

So I continue walking and stop in front of the Free Dental Clinic where I stop to ask a weary looking man standing outside, "Do you know where Otis Street is?" "Right over there," he points. And sure enough, there was the Human Services Agency Building, under the Freeway and beside a Self Storage place.

I go in and meet Dan, sit in his office and chat for awhile about the history of the agency and my research and our research agreement. We are about to head to the cubicle where the boxes are waiting for me. "But first," Dan said, "if you wouldn't mind – I've taken a number of boxes home – so let's find a dolly and maybe you can help me unload them from the trunk of my car." I've taken some boxes home! Unthinkable practice from an archival point of view! We find Albert on the 5th floor who leads us to a hand-cart in the basement and sure enough, there are SIX boxes of records in the trunk of Dan's car. We unload them and add them to the truly random pile of boxes already filling the cubicle that he has set aside for me. "Sorry for the clutter," Dan apologizes, "the boxes were all in that closet over there until a pipe burst last week. Thank goodness we noticed. We've put some of the records in new boxes."

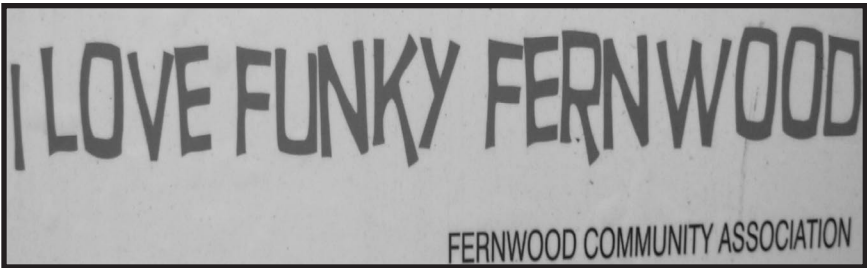


What is totally fascinating about this place and my process of getting here is something about how different it is from a typical archive. How it is a poor people's archive. How I found my way here by way of a poor person's directions. How poor people's records are in trunks of cars and leaky closets ...

... Just back from lunch whereupon I discovered what I thought may have been true from my experience walking in "to the right hand door," as Dan had instructed me this morning. The building "especially designed for the Human Services Agency," Dan assured me, has segregated entrances; that is, there is one entrance for clients and another entrance for staff and "visitors" like me.

Dan asked if we could have lunch one day this week. And of course I would love to do this. AND I realized upon reflection as I walked down Mission Street eating a takeout burrito as fast as I could, that the relationships I'm building while here at the SF-HSA are with poor people in the past and with those who served them. Interesting to be a historian where on these types of trips and in these types of settings – again, different from archives – the people I actually care about are not the ones who are providing social services today (a sociologist or anthropologist might thrive on this) but people who are dead!

Lisa Helps is a scholar and activist committed to poverty reduction, place-based solutions to global and national challenges, and increasing citizen engagement.



You're Invited !!!! to witness history in the making June 10th & 11th, Victoria Courthouse



Lawyers Cathie Boies Parker and Irene Faulkner will be defending Madam Justice Carol Ross' decision, which struck down a city bylaw prohibiting homeless people from constructing temporary shelters to protect themselves from the elements, in the Court of Appeal on June 10th & 11th.

Spectators are welcome in the gallery!

After two years defending the rights of homeless citizens, defined in Canada's Charter as the right to life, liberty, and security of person, the City of Victoria launched an appeal of the the BC Supreme Court ruling of October 14 2008.

Four groups have applied for and been granted intervenor status --BC Civil Liberties Association, Pivot Legal Society and The Poverty & Human Rights Centre (in support of the homeless), and the BC Union of Municipalities (in support of the City's position).

On November 6 2008 Irene and Cathie were recognized by the Victoria Bar Association, receiving the *Contribution to the Law Award* because of their "significant involvement in the development of a legal issue during the year, and which involvement reflects positively on the legal profession." Writing for TheTyee.ca, Andrew Macleod reported "'They selflessly took on a case that other lawyers would have shyed away from,' said Scott Farquhar, president of the VBA, who will present the award at a dinner at the Victoria Golf Club. 'They're very deserving candidates.'"

Cathie and Irene have worked pro bono (for free!) throughout this trial, and are hoping to recover at least some of their costs, so if anyone is inclined to contribute financially, they're welcome to send cheques to "Underhill, Boies Parker, in trust" and those will be treated as a retainer. Unfortunately, tax deductible receipts cannot be offered.

Write cheques to:
Underhill, Boies Parker, in trust
1127 Fort Street
Victoria, BC V8V 3K9

**It's been one year since Victoria's
fixed site needle exchange was closed.**

Join Harm Reduction Victoria in the:

**MARCH for
DIGNITY**

**SUNDAY, MAY 31, 12pm on the boulevard
at Vancouver and Pandora**

- **Demand the immediate end to the no-service zone**
- **Call for the immediate opening of fixed site needle exchange and supervised consumption services**

Speakers from the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), Society for Living Intravenous Drug Users (SOLID) and Street Advocacy Group (SAG)



Food Resources

please send updates to
streetnewz@islandnet.com

9-10 CLUB (ST. ANDREW’S SOUP KITCHEN)
740 View St. Victoria, B.C. V8W 1J8 ph: 388-5571 8 - 10am seven days a week.
Church-run club providing daily meals on a drop-in basis.

ANAWIM COMPANION SOCIETY
973 Caledonia Street Victoria B.C. V8T 1E7 phone: 382-0283
Mon, Tues, Thurs 10am-5pm, Weds, Fri 10am-8pm, Sat 10am-4pm
Laundry, showers, meals, clothing, limited housing spaces.

COMMUNITY FOOD BANK
4-697 Goldstream Ave, 474-4443
Tues, Weds: 10am-3pm, closed last week of the month

ESQUIMALT COMMUNITY LUNCH
Esquimalt United Church Hall, Lyall St., just past Admirals Rd. Tues & Thurs noon-1:15

GOLDSTREAM FOOD BANK
761 Station Rd (Legion Basement), Langford, B.C. phone: 474-4443
3rd Tuesday, monthly at the basement of the Royal Canadian Legion.
Serving the Western Communities from View Royal to Metchosin

FOOD NOT BOMBS
A collectively run food kitchen. Ph: 383-5144, ext 1940
http://users.resist.ca/~fmb-victoria. A collectively run food kitchen.
Free vegetarian serving Sundays, 3 pm - Harris Green (Pandora & Vancouver)
Bring plastic containers for bowls, bags 4 produce.

FRUIT AND VEGGIE BOX
901 Kings Road, Victoria, B.C., V8T 1W5 Phone: 388-7696
Good Food Box Program - order \$5, \$10, or \$15 box of fresh fruit and vegetables at the beginning of the month and receive it in the middle of the month. Purchased in bulk. Order and pick up boxes @ BCC

JAMES BAY COMMUNITY SCHOOL
140 Oswego Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 2B1 phone: 389-1470
Seniors Dinners on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5 PM - \$5.75
Community Dinners Weds, approx. every other month., usually \$4 & \$2 -12 & under.
Tickets must be purchased at the centre in advance
Community school cafe open Mon - Fri 11:45 am -12:30 pm. \$3.25 & child 2.75.

JAMES BAY COMMUNITY PROJECT
547 Michigan Street, Victoria BC. V8V 1S5 (250) 388-7844, email: askus@jbcp.bc.ca
Hours Monday to Friday 8:00am-4:00pm

MEALS ON WHEELS
For residents of Greater Victoria who, because of age, disability or illness, are unable to prepare an adequate meal for themselves, have inadequate cooking facilities, have no one to prepare meals, or have health and social needs. Referrals from doctors, health & Social Services agencies, concerned friends, family, or personal requests. Current cost of meals- \$6.75. In addition to nutritional benefits, some social interaction. 479-6900

MUSTARD SEED STREET CHURCH www.mustardseed.ca
625 Queens Avenue, Victoria, B.C., V8T 1L9 Phone: 250-953-1575
Service for families: Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 9 AM - 2 PM
Service for couples and singles: Thursday 9 AM - 2 PM

OUR PLACE
919 Pandora Ave., Victoria, BC V8V 3P4, Phone: 250-388-7112
9am - 5pm Monday to Friday, closed weekends; showers & laundry 9-3:30
lunch - 11:30 am-12:30 pm; dinner - 4-5 pm
Victoria’s ‘Living Room’ - a drop in centre with computer room, printers, special projects, tea & coffee, singing Wednesdays with Louise Rose.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY
101-831 Yates Street, Victoria, BC V8W 1M1 Phone: 250- 382-2767
9 am-12:30 pm, 1:30 pm-4:30 pm Mon-Friday, Tues aft for Women
Must be 19 yrs, unless referred by parents, ASK, or Soc Services. Food, clothing, household items. Home visits, food vouchers for parents w/children.

SAINT SAVIOUR’S KITCHEN
310 Henry Street, Church Hall (VicWest) phone: 384-8773
Rainbow Kitchen for everyone, Weds, Thurs, Fris, 12 noon 1:30 pm
Shelter Weds-Sat nights, arrive 9-10 pm: mats, blankets, often food. Space for 25-35.

SALVATION ARMY
Family Services and Counselling (singles, too) 2695 Quadra St 250-386-8521
Monday Friday, 9 am - 3:30 pm Emergency food hampers, clothing & small house wares vouchers. Extra shelter space only available in subzero temperatures.

SIKH TEMPLE
1210 Topaz Avenue, Victoria, V8T 2N1: (towards summit park), enter right side door
250-383-5443 Every Sunday at noon - Free food serving, lentil dahl and chapatis, etc.

STREETLINK EMERGENCY SHELTER
1634 Store St., Victoria, B.C. V8W 1S2 Phone: 383-1951, office 383-1951
Free dinner 7 days a week, 3 pm for meal ticket, serving at 3:30

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE
1611 Quadra St., Victoria, B.C., V8W 2L5 phone: 383 7169
Food bank open Tues & Fridays, 10 am-noon, in church basement. (Closed Fri and Tuesday after Welfare Wednesday, and Tuesdays after Monday stat.)

VICTORIA NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE
231 Regina Avenue, Victoria, BC V8Z 1J6, 250-384-3211
Wholesale prices, various size boxes. Pay first, pick up following wk.

Good Food Box Program - Duncan area - 250-746-4204, www.providence.bc.ca.

Housing Resources

No Cost for Service, Time Limited Stay

Salvation Army (Emerg men only) 525 Johnson Street, 384-3396
Streetlink 1634 Store Street, 383-1951
Sandy Merriman House (for women) 809 Burdett Avenue, 480-1408
Sobering & Assessment Ctr (24 hr) 1125 Pembroke (@ Cook) 213-4444
Out of the Rain (Youth 15-25) 812-0490 winter only, various locations
Kiwanis Youth Shelter (13-18) 2117 Vancouver St., 386-8282
Hill House - Women with children 479-3963
Sooke Transition House 642-2591 Women with or without children
Vic. Women’s Transition House 385-6611 Women with or w/out kids
Cridge Centre for the Family 1190 Kings Rd 386-7291 Women & kids
Kiwanis House for single women 16-29 w/ one child 382-1004
Margaret Laurence House 995-0058 Women & kids escaping abuse

Low Cost Monthly Rentals

CLOSED: YWCA Women’s Residence - 880 Courtney Street, 386-7511
Ritz Hotel - 710 Fort Street, 381-1868
Fairfield Hotel - 710 Cormorant St., 386-1621
York Hotel - 711 Johnson Street, 385-2544
Douglas Hotel - 1450 Douglas Street, 383-4157
Ocean Island Backpackers - 791 Pandora Avenue 385-1788
Turtle Refuge Backpackers - 1608 Quadra Street 386-4471
Vic. Human Exchange Soc. 361- 2762, 1-800-691-9366, www.humanx.org
Extreme Outreach - men only, \$350 + dep. No alcohol or drugs. 708-2064

Subsidized and/or Supported Housing Services

BC Housing (subsidized - low income families, 55+, or w/disabilities)
301- 3440 Douglas Street, 475-7550 www.bchousing.org

Burnside Gorge Community Assoc. 388-5251 members.shaw.ca/bgca

Capital. Region Housing (subsidized, low income families, 55+, disabilities)
623 Fisgard, 388-6422 www.crd.bc.ca/housing

Capital Mental Health Association Satellite Housing Program 250-389-1211

Coordinated Housing Registry (subsidized & supported housing)
www.coolaid.org 826 Cormorant St. 356-2548

M’Akola Housing Society 384-1423

Pacifica Housing Advisory Assoc. (families) 827 Fisgard 385-2131

Pacifica Housing Serv/Downtown Outreach Serv (connects low-income folk w/ housing in private sector) 826 Cormorant 356-2555

Pandora Youth Apts 753 Pandora, For 15-19 yrs, Andrea - 380-2663

St. Vincent de Paul Soc. 382-2767 www.svdpvictoria.com/services/

Victoria Senior Citizen Housing Society - Please register with the Housing Registry at the BC Housing Management Commission: 301-3440 Douglas 250.475.7550

Some Housing Searches on the Internet

BC Housing Subsidized Housing List	www.bchousing.org
Brown Bros. Property Management	www.brownbros.com
BC Co-Operative Housing	www.chf.bc.ca/
Camosun Off Campus Housing List	http://www.myidealhome.com/ccss
David Burr Property Management	www.davidburr.com
Off Campus Housing for students	housing.uvic.ca/ads/index.php www.homes4students.ca

Helpful Housing Hints

- 1. Add your name to the BC Housing list.
- 2. Add your name to the Coordinated Housing Registry.
- 3. Get the addresses & phone numbers of subsidized or supported housing units from the Cool Aid Society, the BGCA, M’Akola, etc. If you find one you like, make friends, impress them, ask them to pull your name off the list. They can let you in, but you have to be listed with BC Housing first.

Some places to call for help

Action Committee of People with Disabilites - 926 View St., 383-4105
Adult Addiction Comm. Treatment Serv: 2nd floor, 1250 Quadra, 727-3544
AIDS Vancouver Island: 1601 Blanshard St., 384-2366
Alano Club: 1402 Broad St, 383-9151
Alcoholics Anon: #8, 2020 Douglas, 383-7744 (help), 383-0415 (off)
Cool-Aid Medical Clinic: 385-1466
Cool-Aid Phone Message Service (\$5/mth): 383-1977
Credit Counselling - 477-9998
Foundation of Support of Recovery for Men: 480-1342
HomelessNation.org - online community - 130-3 pm, Wednesdays, 755 Pandora
Grief/Bereavement Counsel: Lorraine Jasmin, R.P.C., 1198 Goldstream, sliding scale
Lalli Care Clinic - Drug Info, Med. Review, Alt Health - 386-5100, www.lallicareclinic.ca
Men’s Trauma Centre: 381-6367, #203-1420 Quadra St. www.menstrauma.ca
Outreach Services Methadone Clinic: 2004 Fernwood Rd., 480-1232
Problem Gambling Help Line - 1-888-795-6111
Prostitute Empowerment & Education (PEERS): 744 Fairview Rd., 388-5325
Research, Education, Evaluation, & Support Prog. (REES): 595-8619
Salvation Army Addictions & Rehab Centre: 525 Johnson, 384-3396
Seniors’ Advocacy Group - 388-7696 for advive; 360-1068 to be an advocate
Society of Living Intravenous Drugusers (SOLID): 7-9 pm Weds, 1947 Cook
Together Against Poverty Society (TAPS): #302-895 Fort St 361-3521
Victoria Native Friendship Centre: 384-3211 -- 231 Regina Ave V8Z 1J6
Victoria Sobering & Assessment Centre: 1125 Pembroke, 213-4444
Vancouver Island Addiction Recovery Soc.: 536 Cecelia, 480-1342
Youth-to-Youth Support Line - 24 hours. Confidential. 386-TALK, www.youthlines.ca

Breakfast Club

First Saturday: St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Hall, 680 Courtney St, 8-10 am
Second Saturday: St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Hall, 680 Courtney St, 8-10 am
Third Saturday: Glad Tidings Pentecostal Church Hall, 1800 Quadra St. 8-10
Fourth Saturday: Central Baptist Church, 833 Pandora, 8-10 am; 385-7786
Fifth Saturday: BC Ferry Workers’ Union at St. Andrew’s Hall, 8-10 am

DAY WORKERS FOR HIRE

We provide dependable labour for the odd jobs that arise in your home, office, or business. All wages go directly to the workers.

101-749 Pandora, 388-9296

this page is devoted to the life of Harriet Nahanee

No 2010 Olympic Opposition

Who we are:

No 2010 Victoria operates as an umbrella group for Victoria’s activist community to network in opposition to the Olympics. We consider ourselves a parallel group to the No 2010 Committee in Vancouver and strive to collaborate with our allies on the mainland.

It is our goal to create an open organizing hub for Anti-Olympic outreach projects and to educate the general public about issues surrounding the 2010 Olympics. More than a single rallying point of contention, we view the 2010 Olympics as the prism through which we can address ongoing systemic issues in Victoria, including poverty, ecocide, industrial capitalism, etc.

We acknowledge the traditional lands of the indigenous peoples who lived here before us.

No 2010 Victoria Basis of Unity

(adopted from the Olympics Resistance Network)

Statement: Solidarity and Unity in Opposing the 2010 Olympics
February 2009

The Olympics Resistance Network is a space to coordinate anti-colonial and anti-capitalist efforts against the 2010 Games within Coast Salish Territories. Our organizing is based on the recognition that the Olympics is taking place on unceded Native land, and exists to create a movement for all anti capitalist, Indigenous, anti poverty, labour, migrant justice, housing, environmental justice, civil libertarian, anti war, and anti colonial activists to join forces. We come together on the basis of anti-oppression principles and with a respect for diversity of tactics. In addition to building ongoing educational and resistance efforts, we are working towards a convergence between February 10th-15th 2010, based on the call by the Indigenous Peoples Gathering in Sonora Mexico, to boycott the Games.

We recognize that we, the Olympics Resistance Network, represent part of a wider movement opposing the 2010 Olympics. Therefore this statement aims to encourage solidarity and unity amongst the diverse groups, communities, and movements who are opposed to and/or critical of the 2010 Winter Olympics.

The negative effects of the upcoming 2010 Winter Games are already quite clear:

- * Expansion of sport tourism and resource extraction on Indigenous lands. There are over \$5 billion worth of resort plans since the Olympic bid, despite significant grassroots Indigenous opposition for example around Kamloops and Mount Currie. According to the Native Youth Movement, “The Olympics opens up our land, our sacred sites, and our medicine grounds to big corporations, but we want them to know that our land is not for sale.”
- * Increasing homelessness and gentrification of poor neighbourhoods especially Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. It is projected that the number of homeless in Vancouver will triple from 1000 homeless people since the Olympic bid in 2003 to over 3200 people by 2010. According to a report by the Geneva-based Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, the Olympic Games have displaced more than two million people around the world over the last 20 years.
- * Unprecedented destruction of the environment. This includes massive deforestation in the Callaghan Valley to build the Whistler Olympic Center, clearcuts of Cypress Mountain which is a designated 2010 venue location; massive sand and gravel mining operations to provide construction materials; and the destruction of Eagleridge Bluffs due to the Sea-to-Sky Highway construction. In 2007, 71-year old Pacheedaht elder Harriet Nahanee and 78-year old environmentalist Betty Krawczyk were two of the arrestees at a blockade opposing construction at Eagleridge Bluffs. Harriet Nahanee contracted pneumonia at the Surrey Pre-Trial Center. She died a few days later, while hospitalized, on Feb. 24, 2007.
- * More privatization of public services and ballooning public debt. The total cost for 2010 and related construction will be close to \$6 billion, with Olympic venues alone costing over \$4.5 billion. For example, taxpayers are on the hook for \$875 million for the 2010 Olympic Athletes Village’s construction costs alone.
- * Union busting through imposed contracts and vulnerable working conditions especially for migrant labour. There are an estimated 3,000-5,000 temporary migrant and undocumented workers in the Olympics-fuelled and speculation-driven construction industry that are prone to hyper-exploitation and are vulnerable given their lack of full legal status.
- * Increased funding (up to \$1 billion) for the police, military, and border control agents in the name of so-called national security. Sociologist David Lyon has dubbed Vancouver 2010 “the Surveillance Games” since security operations will include over 13,000 RCMP, military & other security personnel as well as joint US-Canada military & North American Aerospace Defence Command operations.
- * Criminalization of the poor. Plans to “cleanse” the city’s core of the poor include increased funding for private security initiatives such as the Downtown Ambassadors; passing of the Safe Streets Act which prohibits sitting or lying down on city sidewalks; banning dumpsters from the downtown core; and more.



Given this devastating reality, we are aware that there is wide-spread opposition to the 2010 Winter Olympics. This ranges from those who are opposing the negative impacts of the Games to those who seek to boycott the Games; from those who desire to raise public awareness about the Games to those who choose to engage in direct action against the Games and its sponsors; from those who are concerned about single issues surrounding the Games to those who are concerned about the overall impact of the Games.

Despite our differences in analysis and strategies we believe we have a significant opportunity to come together and voice our opposition to the 2010 Olympic

Games. This statement of unity does not call for us to fully agree or stand by each other’s tactics or ideas, although we believe we have much to learn and understand from one another. Rather, this statement calls for a basic unity in expressing our critique of the 2010 Olympics Games and committing to finding ways to work and support each other in our complementary efforts to expose this two-week circus and the oppression it represents to so many communities and sectors.

In solidarity, Olympics Resistance Network.

Endorsed by 2010 Watch, Alliance for People’s Health, Anarchist Blackcross Melbourne, Anti Poverty Committee, AntiWar @ Laurier, Christian Radical, Community Solidarity Coalition (Victoria), Edmonton Small Press Association, F.ck off and Dance, Free Lex Wotton - Australia, Gerald and Maas Inc, Grandview Woodlands Area Council, Healing the Earth Radio, Indigenous Action Movement, Indigenous Peace Education, Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement-Guelph, Industrial Workers of the World, Joey Only Outlaw Band, Native 2010 Resistance, Native Youth Movement, No2010.com, No2010 Victoria, No One Is Illegal-Ottawa, No One Is Illegal-Toronto, No One Is Illegal-Vancouver, Oil Sands Truth, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, Rising Tide North America, Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group, Sound Resistance Radio, St’at’imc NYM, Stratford Action For Equality, Sudbury Against War and Occupation, Teaching Support Staff Union Social Justice Committee, The Grey Tigers Seniors Group, UBC Colour Connected Against Racism, Vancouver Island Community Forest Action Network, Vancouver Status of Women, Warrior Publications, Wild Earth, Work Less Party, Common Action.

Please join us for the next No 2010 Victoria meeting on Thursday, June 4th, 2009 at 7 pm at Camas Bookstore, 2590 Quadra Street, Victoria. Meetings are held every second Thursday. For more info: no2010victoria.net.



Broken Timber

by Brian Mason

is overlooked in our modern, collective longing to move voluntarily to ways of life compatible with our earthly home. The modern versions of utopia – sustainable, satisfying, peaceful ways of life for billions of people – are not feasible for this reason.

We have been fouling our own nest now for nearly 10,000 years, ever since the outbreak of agriculture and our earliest moves towards the frenetic density of cities. Many civilizations and empires have come and gone during these centuries, but one thing throughout has remained unchanged: us. We are the invaders, the schemers, the marauders, the openers of frontiers and the stealers of land; we are the spreaders of dominion and disease, of culture and knowledge. We are the Mesopotamians, the Egyptians and the Romans; the Persians, the Normans, the Chinese and the Mayans; the Polynesians and every other erstwhile eternal empire. We are the Easter Islanders and the Greenland Vikings. We are the dreamers and proselytizers, we are the peoples of the Enlightenment and the Renaissance. Yet we remain exactly as we were when we began this journey.

High society, tall buildings and chic technology are no more than glitter: they passingly bear witness as artefact. The hope of making artificial intelligence in machines we might yet create would only displace and project the “human” problem. We, in both great and increasing numbers, have dug deeply into the earth only to mar the substrate of existence. All the scientific knowledge and clever technology in the world, no matter how abundant and impressive, will not transform humanity. Those who are counting on religion for this upgrade will be similarly disappointed.

Marx wrote of the importance of producing “fully developed human beings” and “the full development of the human race.” For him, then, a new “man” was necessary in order to reach the communist utopia. Though Marx foresaw this happening naturally as a consequence of historical or dialectical materialism, it was nevertheless the case that his new world order would depend on a new version of humanity. For that reason, it is a flawed a theory of social change like all the rest.

We are what we are, with ten millennia of experience lined up as the evidence behind us. One look back should be convincing enough. This history can’t be overcome, much less overlooked. Our present predicament is the latest installment of our short story. We can no more become a qualitatively different creature than we can turn into fairies. While evolution may bestow wisdom on another species in the next go-round, it is not for us to will it into existence for ourselves as a means to a utopian end.

We have never taken the time to listen to one another. With our puffed-up glory of self-importance wrapped around our self-righteousness, we have waged never-ending war – territorial, economic, religious and cultural – against one another and our fellow creatures. Our loyalties have manifested in the will to prevail over the Different, before they can take us. Recent research in psychology shows that our minds naturally divide the human world into groups and that this tendency gets magnified along racial lines to the point where we may “be unconsciously inclined to see people from other ethnic groups not simply as different, but as cheats, morally corrupt, bad people.” [New Scientist, March 17, 2007). In other words, we instinctively see the Different as less than human, less than ourselves.

There has never been a quiet time of human reflection – even the golden age of Athens, during which Socrates himself was sent into battle more than once, as a foot-soldier, was stunningly short-lived. It has always been taken from us by the contingencies of survival, in our trying to best the Different. In the beginning, we may have feared the unknown of Nature, the dark forest and the night equally, but that was a long time ago. Fear of the Different has been the real driver of civilizations: get there ahead of them – or take it from them – or you won’t get your share.

Being responsible for the human crisis in the first place, we seem to imagine we can work our way back out of it – like following a trail of candies from the woods. Comforted in the knowledge that we have produced a Beethoven and a Shakespeare, a Confucius and a Plato, an Einstein and a Buddha (all men, don’t you see), we, as a species, suppose we are wise enough to reverse or change course. Only the earth doesn’t much care which way humans go: continents circle one another and collide, climates heat and cool, species arise and disappear. Beyond us, stars form and go dark.

Ours is a problem of us, for us – for 10,000 years, and today. Neither religion nor quantum physics will bail us out: worlds beyond and worlds in parallel offer no escape. We are stuck with ourselves as we are. We will have to be satisfied with small achievements, neighbourhood by neighbourhood. And work with what we are, not with what we wish or imagine we could be. Our history, sadly, is that we can’t get along – at least not for any length of time or across an important range of issues – let alone stay in one place contentedly. The full and sobering realization of these truths will have to influence how we define and approach issues of social order and change.

For my part in how to proceed, I am partial to Edgar Allen Poe’s four conditions of happiness, consisting of life in the open air, the love of another human being, freedom from (or contempt for) all ambition and the unceasing pursuit of something creative.

Brian Mason lives in James Bay.

All visions of social utopia include a fatal flaw, a belief in the perfectibility of humankind. Thus a new, ideal version of humanity is a prerequisite to crossing the thresholds of these promised lands. This consideration

Canada: Destination of Choice for International Criminal Gang

by C. L. Cook

On St. Patrick’s day this year, George W. Bush made his first foreign visit since his presidency, calling in on a Calgary forum arranged by events Wunderkinds, Christian Darbyshire and Andy McCreath of tinePublic Inc. The pair have now seemingly outdone themselves, booking both a return appearance for Bush, but also wangling Bill Clinton for an ex-president double-header. Though still not confirmed by venue operators at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, the word is: Clinton and Bush will appear for a “conversation” in Hogtown May 29th.

During Bush’s Calgary visit, protesters came out in force, demanding the RCMP and/or the Calgary City Police arrest the former president for his admitted role in authorizing torture against perceived or suspected terrorists. Canada, as a signatory to the International Convention on Torture is obliged to bar entry into the country of known or suspected torturers. Failing refusal at the border, the authorities here, on discovering such an individual is in the country, are obliged by the Convention to hold that person pending investigation, or turn the suspect over to a jurisdiction that can be reasonably expected to do same.

Needless to say, the Canadian authorities did not fulfill their duties as demanded, in fact arresting and charging protesters. The law will be given a second chance in Toronto, should the Clinton-Bush rumours prove true, to arrest self-confessed torturer Bush, but could also use the opportunity to serve notice to his war criminal co-performer, Bill Clinton.

By definition, America’s 1998 bombing of Belgrade and Yugoslavia was a war crime; as was the destruction he ordered of a Sudanese pharmaceutical plant; as was the near daily bombing of Iraq over the years leading to Bush II’s invasion of that benighted nation. If the thousands killed during Clinton’s tenure in Washington is not sufficient cause to move Canadian justice to act to rein in serial killer Bill, there is another crime Clinton must answer for; a crime even greater than the half million children to die unnecessarily due to Clinton’s siege and bombing campaign against Iraq, or the wiping out of the sub-Saharan Africa’s only pharmaceutical installation.

Way back in the 1980s, while Bill and Hill roughed it in the backwater politics of Arkansas, Governor Clinton allowed a bit of business continue that saw the state’s prison system used as a cash cow for the international blood products industry.

Health Management Associates (HMA) was a little outfit run by Clinton crony, Leonard Dunn. Though selling prisoner blood is not permitted in Arkansas, Dunn figured a way he could milk his captive cash cows, usually trading drugs or cigarettes for the privilege, then flog the plasma on the international market. This he did, despite complaints made by medical staff saying prisoners with hepatitis and AIDS were routine donors, in many cases forced by inmate “handlers” to repeatedly give blood.

This is “no right-wing conspiracy.” This is known to Canadian law enforcement thanks to the four year Krever Commission investigation of what became known in Canada as the ‘Tainted Blood Scandal.’ The greater scandal being, none of the real perpetrators of this highly profitable scheme were ever brought to justice. In Canada, the Canadian Red Cross bore the brunt of thousands infected with Hep C and AIDS, while none spoke for the prisoners exploited, or the unknown many hundreds of thousands infected by corrupted plasma products, “donated” in Arkansas, processed in Canada, and shipped to unsuspecting medical patients around world.

Krever’s report makes no mention of Clinton’s role in the ‘Tainted Blood Scandal’ disaster. Just as Canada’s police forces will not act on George W.’s tortured past, neither will they be called to arrest the man that made possible the destruction of uncounted numbers of Canadian lives.

Speaker’s fees and ticket prices of the yet to be confirmed Toronto double appearance have not been announced, (and won’t be, if tinePublic Inc.’s Bush Calgary gig is any indicator), but by any reasonable measure, it’s not what the pair deserve from a Canadian audience.

Sources:
Krever Commission: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahec-asc/activit/com/krever-eng.php
Wikipedia: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tainted_blood_scandal
Victims Outraged at court acquittals of all defendants: www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20070928/tainted_blood_070928/20070930?hub=Health

Chris Cook is managing editor to the web news site, PacificFreePress.com and hosts Gorilla Radio, broad/webcast from CFUV Radio at the University of Victoria.



Photo: A Jordanian girl holds a poster depicting Venezuela’s President Hugo Chavez and Argentine revolutionary fighter Che Guevara during a protest against the Israeli attacks on Gaza, outside the Venezuelan embassy in Amman January 8, 2009. Venezuela expelled the ambassador to Israel on Tuesday in protest over the offensive in Gaza only hours after leftist President Hugo Chavez called the attacks a Palestinian “holocaust.” REUTERS/Ali Jarekji (JORDAN).

Thanks to Younas for this translation: “The faint Arabic writing on the head band says Gaza. The poster says: Al-Alam Al-Arabi. Al-Alam means the sign, emblem, flag, and hero. Al-Arabi means of Arabs or Arabic. So, joined together it means: The hero of Arabs.



Remembering Mike

by Derrick Nash

You may have heard that there was a homeless man murdered in front of a school on Kingsway Ave. in Vancouver in April of this year. Well it turns out that he, Michael Ciro Nestoruk or Mike, was in treatment with me at Miracle Valley near Mission. He was in my group.



We were like fric and frac, always together. He had one leg and used a wheel chair, and being that Miracle Valley was in the middle of nowhere, we would go for long hikes together, for miles at a time. It was amazing what he could do in his chair. We would even go to a farm that was about three miles down the road, and pick blueberries for some extra cash. He was twice as fast as I was at picking berries, he would push his chair up and down between the rows of bushes and was as happy as a lark doing it. A couple of times, a group of us got to go to a friends cabin in Hope for the weekend and it was a joy to see this one legged character dive, swim and ride a Sea-Do like there was no tomorrow.

In the particular therapy group that we were in we had the privilege of being exposed to art therapy. Mike loved it and became convinced that his paintings would someday be worth something. He called them “abstract,” I called them a mess ... but when you look at one of them, you knew that a big part of Mike was within the splashes of colour on that paper or canvas.

While we were going through the treatment part of our stay at Miracle Valley, we shared a lot. He was so in love with his two young daughters, they were more friends to him than daughters. He was so excited to be able to visit with them on weekends, and would return on Sunday evening with tales of how much fun they had ... being that he was really just a big kid himself.... As well, he would express hope that one day, he and his wife would get back together ... something he wanted more than anything else.

Mike was a kind, caring, talented man who made others feel that they were not alone. His ability to relate to others, no matter how different their story, was a true gift. I watched him cry, pray, laugh ... and even though he suffered great personal, emotional, mental and physical pain, he was on constant watch for those around him to see if there was another who was not doing so good and within the blink of an eye he and his wheel chair would be parked right next to that person and they would be smiling because Mike was there, telling a joke, relating a story or just listening.

Mike was a good friend to me during our four month stay at Miracle Valley. His empathy and sense of humour got me through a lot of bad days and was a big part of the reason I was able to hang in there and see my way through treatment.

The last time I saw Mike was the day I left Miracle Valley, almost four years ago. He said that he was worried about me and wanted me to stay on another few weeks ... it was one of the only times I had seen him that he was not smiling.

I have been blessed, as I have not had to drink or use drugs since then ... but Mike’s pain was so overwhelming that, despite a great inner yearning to be a father, a husband, and a “normal,” productive human being once again, he felt that he had to kill that pain with drugs ... that pain was so intense that it made him feel that maybe his lot in life was instead to be that of a homeless, drug addicted beggar.....

Well I can honestly say that the Mike I knew ... loved his family, cared about his fellow human beings, he had hopes, dreams, passions and faith

The Michael Ciro Nestoruk that I knew was a good man trying to be a better one, and I will never forget him. I really regret not keeping in touch with him, and I am really really sorry that I was not there for him that week when someone brutally murdered him.

I love you Mike ... I miss you. And I will say many many prayers for you and your family.

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A Tribute to Jason Peacemaker

vimeo.com/4555733

by Ian Dakers

Recently a friend of mine passed away on Commercial Drive. He was a first nations singer/songwriter who had recently become homeless again and was already dealing with AIDS. His songs were brilliant and he made his living on the street singing where everyone knew him and loved him. He was always being funny. He was very generous with whatever he had. And most of what he had was his heart in his songs.

This is more than a tribute...it’s a message to us all about how we need to unite and help out our fellow humans. As Canadians we need to remove the racism and oppression and extend the hand of friendship and humility for there is much we have to learn about living sustainably.

The footage starts with Clarence Dennis, the elder and chief of the Grandview Homeless nation tribe, speaking about homelessness and interactions with the police. I have spent much time with Clarence and it is a joy to sit by his side. He is a Canadian icon and yet little known in the white world other than his stands for First Nations Defense and numerous breaches of the ‘legal system’ that enslaved his people. He has victories under his belt as well as many years of imprisonment. He is well loved by many to whom he always brings a bright disposition. Our police forces need some major retraining regarding the use of force and how they handle first nations people, drunk or otherwise.

Jason speaks of his condition (this is a few weeks before he dies). He sings 4 songs overall in the documentary, one of which “We are One” has the same quality

of “We are the World.” A song to bring people together. He also makes up a brilliant song on the spot ... you can witness his gift for songwriting and singing.

We were looking at ‘pioneering’ a first nations artist entrepreneur program called Solid Ground and we were speaking with United Native



Nations towards seeing how to make it happen. It is with Jason’s death that I see much clearer the work that I want to do and how to do it. A platform has to be built for people in Jason’s situation. It’s stormy weather and there needs to be something for artists to cling to before they can get on solid ground. That is a process. You need resources and a system to do so.

Jason is an example of whole generations of first nations artists who struggle with addictions and unsuitable housing arrangements and yet continue to create incredible pieces of art that get sold for a pittance on the street. The residential school holocaust permeates the first nations culture and its scars need to be healed in traditional as well as integrative holistic medicine ways.

This is going out to the people I know. I ask you to watch this and get some idea of an alternative media... one that shows the community and what is going on at a grassroots level. We need to be our own media. We need to craft a new course by changing how we focus our attention.

In the near future this will be very important once the system breaks down. This is a bit of a never ending wake up call. The ship is on at yellow alert. Danger approaching and you must be able to see it coming. Start getting prepared....all the essentials and within the next 2 years. Don’t dilly dabble. Wonderland is soon to end.

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They call it Democracy



According to election results posted at CBC.ca, 10,034 people voted for Gordon Campbell in Vancouver-Point Grey on May 12, 2009. There were 8,113 votes reported for the NDP candidate Mel Lehan, 1,733 votes for Green candidate Stephen Kronstein, and John Ince, the SEX party candidate, received 109 votes.

Interestingly, Elections BC's website lists different numbers: Gordon Campbell with 10, 838 votes, then John Ince at 115, Stephen Kronstein with 1,816, and Mel Lehan at 8,642.

Assuming that Elections BC is reporting slightly more accurate numbers, that means 10,573 people in Gordon Campbell's riding did not vote for him, and he 'won' the office of the Premier with 265 votes. If you believe the CBC, 9955 people did not vote for Gordo, and he became premier with just 79 votes between him and the dissenting voices.

In any event, for the next four years Gordon Campbell will be in a position to determine the future of our province with a 'victory' of either 265 or 79 votes. Here's another way of looking at it. There are approximately 3,226,400 registered voters in BC and about half of us - one million, six hundred thirteen thousand, two hundred people - did not endorse the system that has again placed this king at the helm. Gordon Campbell was convicted of drunk driving in Maui on January 10th, 2003.



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partied in style and had a blast!
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On that Fateful evening April 14, Titanic received
warnings of Ice-bergs ahead.
But the Captain, totally unaware what deadly
doom lay ahead, pushed the mighty ship full speed ahead.
Like a Sinister Serpent, the Iceberg pierced
the mighty ship where the impact could be felt from the hull to the tip.
Still many people felt any cause for alarm, for they believed Titanic
unsinkable, unthinkable
As water filled the hull and the ship people began to panic and scream
So into the lifeboats with women and children
first as the Captain and crew prepared for the worst!
And the band played as the passengers sang
"Nearer My God to Thee" as they slipped into an icy watery grave.
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As you ponder upon this story hold in Reverence and
shed a tear or two or more
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